P780015-1407

SCS custody case 1 of 2

EXCISE

OFFICIAL INFORMAL
UNCLASSIFIED

January 30, 1978

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Simms DATE 2-26-81
EXCISIONS AUTHORIZED AS INDICATED

Dear Dick:

Thank you for your kind letter. As you correctly surmised, I have been charged with overall responsibility for the custody and welfare inquiries generated by the People's Temple's presence in Guyana.

Thus far we in Washington have been very pleased with the overall Embassy response to the many inquiries and charges connected with the group. We have received some indication that there is a mail campaign being started which charges that the Department and the Ambassador have not always acted in an impartial manner. Our intital telephone response to the charge has been that we are very much aware that all the concerned personalities are American citizens and that all persons involved have the same rights to consular protection. With that background we feel that both the Department and the Embassy have been absolutely impartial in their dealings with the group and with individual members of the group. We feel that your reports on your visits reflect that impartiality and that the reports are fair and balanced. Would it be possible for you to obtain a Privacy Act authorization statement from Jim Jones for use in answering the queries that we are sure to receive about our dealings with the People's Temple?

I trust that you will appreciate that your excellent reporting has enabled us to answer the many Congressional and public inquiries that we receive here in Washington rather than forwarding them to you for reply. I hope that you have received copies of all of the Congressionals, however many of them are absolute duplicates.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY J Smith DATE 2/8/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☒
RELEASE DENIED☐
FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

Richard A. McCoy, Esquire,
American Consul,
Georgetown, Guyana.

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For your information I am enclosing a copy of correspondence with the Justice Department in which an Assistant Attorney General neatly outlines the applicability of First Amendment freedoms to sect or cult religions such as the People's Temple. We have found the language useful in replying to queries from concerned relatives here.

I am departing Washington in May or June for assignment to Jidda. I am not certain that I will be here during all of March as I hope to attend several courses before leaving the Department. However, I very much would like to meet with you while you are here. Please let me know when you plan to be in D.C. so we can work out such a meeting.

Once again, thank you for your letter and I hope to see you in March.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Powers, Chief
Welfare and Whereabouts Unit
Office of Special Consular Services

Enclosure:
As stated

CA:SCS:EAPowers:sjd:wp 1/25/78 Clearances: SCS - Mr. Rivera